

discussed this subject fully in his treatise on the soul. He says: "This view [that the foetus has no soul] is entertained by the Stoics, along with Aenesidemus, and occasionally by Plato himself, when he tells us that the soul, being quite a separate formation, originating elsewhere and externally to the womb, is inhaled when the new-born infant first draws breath." This was the opinion prevalent among all classes of the pagan world, and the practice was universal and avowed of killing the foetus by drugs. But Christianity took the other view, that the soul came at the earliest stage, and maintained that it was equally sinful "to take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to birth." Accordingly the heathen practice was forbidden by the Church. The prohibition made its appearance at an early period in Christianity, for it occurs in the Epistle of Barnabas, written about the beginning of the second century, and we are told that Peter says in the Apocalypse (an apocryphal writing probably of early date) "that abortive infants shall share the better fate: that these are committed to a guardian angel, so that, on receiving knowledge, they may obtain the better abode, having had the same experiences which they would have had, had they been in the body."

This view of the Christians in regard to infanticide would tend largely to increase the number of women in the world, as infant girls were the most frequent victims of the practice. The ascetic tendency, on the other hand, repressed the growth of population. It had also a deteriorating effect on posterity. The less spiritual classes of the people, the laymen, being taught that marriage might be licentious and that it implied an inferior state of sanctity, were rather inclined to neglect matrimony for more loose connections, and it was these persons alone that then peopled the world. It was the survival of the unfittest. The noble men and women, on the other hand, who were dominated by the loftiest aspirations and exhibited the greatest temperance, self-control, and virtue, left no children. During this period there is a striking absence of home life in the history of Christians. No son succeeds his father, no wife comforts the wearied student, no daughter soothes the sorrow of the aged bishop. Perhaps this absence of domestic affection, this deficiency in healthy and vigorous offspring, this homelessness, may account in some degree for the striking features of the next century, and especially the prevalent hard-

ness of heart. Then men disputed with the utmost bitterness and ferocity about minute points of doctrine which are now incomprehensible almost to every one, and matters of absolute indifference to this generation, and they pronounced sentence of eternal damnation without the slightest compunction on all who differed from them. Then treatises were written to show why every heretic should be put to death in this life and tortured eternally in the life to come. And there is scarcely a champion of the faith, orthodox or heterodox, who was not accused of fearful crimes. If a lesson is to be drawn it surely is that, as with individuals there is no place like home, so with a State, there is no institution like home; that a community can be great only where there are happy, harmonious, and virtuous homes, and that homes cannot be happy and harmonious and virtuous unless woman is accorded a worthy place in these homes, with freedom of action, with a consciousness of responsibility, and with the right, unfettered by circumstance or prejudice, to develop all that is best and noblest in her to the utmost perfection.

J. DONALDSON.

From The National Review.

MR. STEVENSON'S METHODS IN FICTION.

SOMEWHERE, I think that it is in the preface to "Prince Otto," Mr. Stevenson remarks in his playful, half-earnest way, "I still purpose, by hook or crook, this book or the next, to launch a masterpiece." There are many who, on reading his last book, "The Master of Ballantrae," may be inclined to think that he has carried out his promise. If a strong story, strongly told, full of human interest, and absolutely original in its situations, makes a masterpiece, then this may lay claim to the title. But, unfortunately, the word is a nebulous one. There is no Greenwich standard yard by which genius can be measured and tested. Contemporary critics can but give their judgment from their own more or less fallible points of view. The final court of appeal must always, in the long run, be public opinion, and that slow-going and ponderous tribunal must be given at least a generation before being asked for its final decision. When it does say its last word, however, it is seldom or never wrong.

There is profound truth, in literary as in other matters, in the aphorism laid down by the late Walter Bagehot. "Experi-

ence shows," says he, "that no man is on all points so wise as the mass of men are after a good discussion, and that if the ideas of the very wisest were, by miracle, to be fixed on the race, the certain result would be to stereotype monstrous error." Critics, from the days of Jeffrey to those of our own, have been a very positive race, but they have also been a very fallible one. A quiet process of readjustment is continually going on which revises their decisions and corrects their errors, whether in regard to the merits of single books, or, more often, to the comparative position of contemporary authors. We can see the process going on now in the case of those recent or living writers whose work stands far enough away from us to allow us a little perspective. The collective voice of the reading public tends to confirm or to reconsider the value of their labors. It may, at present, be merely a tendency, but it makes for a definite and permanent result. Scott and Thackeray more than hold their own. George Eliot and Lytton are on the wane. Charles Reade and Meredith come to the front.

Bearing the extreme fallibility of contemporary criticism before our minds, then, we must weigh our words carefully before we speak of masterpieces. Yet, if the intense inward conviction of a sympathetic reader may count for anything, Mr. Stevenson had at the very time when he penned those words already given to the world one piece of work so complete in itself, and so symmetrically good, that it is hardly conceivable that it should ever be allowed to drop out of the very first line of English literature. "The Pavilion on the Links" marks the high-water mark of his genius, and is enough in itself, without another line, to give a man a permanent place among the great story-tellers of the race. Mr. Stevenson's style is always most pure, and his imagination is usually vivid, but in this one tale the very happiest use of words is wedded to the most thrilling, most concentrated interest. It would be difficult to name any tale of equal length in which four characters, those of Northmour, Cassilis, the absconding banker, and his daughter, stand out so strongly and so clearly — the more Titanic for the lurid background against which they move. There have been changes, and all for the worse, between the story as it originally appeared in *Cornhill* and as it reappeared in "The New Arabian Nights," but even as it stands it is a piece of work of extraordinary merit.

Yet if "The Pavilion on the Links" has

claims to be considered a masterpiece, and may confidently hope to stand the merciless test of time, the same must also be conceded to "Dr. Jekyll." In fact, of the two, "Dr. Jekyll," though slightly inferior as a work of art, has the greater certainty of longevity. The allegory within it would lengthen its days, even should new methods and changes of taste take the charm from the story. As long as man remains a dual being, as long as he is in danger of being conquered by his worse self, and, with every defeat, finds it the more difficult to make a stand, so long "Dr. Jekyll" will have a personal and most vital meaning to every poor, struggling human being. *Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.* So craftily is the parable worked out that it never obtrudes itself upon the reader or clogs the action of the splendid story. It is only on looking back, after he has closed the book, that he sees how close is the analogy and how direct the application. On the whole, it can hardly be doubted that, whatever may become of his longer books, Mr. Stevenson's aspiration has been doubly realized, and that he has already produced not one, but two pieces of work which, test them as you will, still make good their claim to the title of masterpiece.

One cannot speak of "Dr. Jekyll" and of "The Pavilion on the Links" without alluding to the other short stories in the three series of "The New Arabian Nights," "The Merry Men," and "The Dynamiter." It must be confessed that they are very unequal. Were they all up to the standard of the two already discussed, or even up to the less exacting level of the first episode of "The Suicide Club" or of "The Sire De Maletroit's Door," they might lay a claim to the highest place among such collections. Many of the tales, however, are slight and inconsequent to an exasperating extent. The brilliancy and vigor of the style will always carry the reader along, but the exiguous story leaves an empty and dissatisfied feeling behind it. It jars upon one to see so perfect an instrument applied to so inconclusive a purpose. Yet even when the tale, as a whole, misses its mark, there will always remain some strange, telling phrase, some new, vivid conception, so apt or so striking, that it is not to be dismissed from the memory. For example, the Mormon story in "The Dynamiter" might fade away as a connected tale, but how are we to forget the lonely fire in the valley, the white figure which dances and screams among the

snow, or the horrid ravine in which the caravan is starved. It is just these sudden flashes of extraordinary lucidity and vigor which make it so very difficult to assess the value of such tales or to weigh them against others which may preserve a higher average, although they are never capable of rising to such extreme brilliancy.

The art of writing a first-class short tale is entirely distinct from that of producing a good novel. The best proof of the essential difference between the two is, that the great masters of the one have met with no success in the other. Neither Thackeray, nor Scott, nor Reade, nor George Eliot, nor Wilkie Collins have ever written any short story which deserved to live upon its own merits. Lytton has written one and only one. On the other hand, those who have written the best short stories have been by no means equally fortunate in a longer flight. The writer of "Metempsychosis," for example, which is certainly one of the very finest short tales in the whole range of our literature, has made no mark with any novel. Nathaniel Hawthorne might at first sight appear to be a man who excelled in both arts, but his books are, when closely looked at, merely short tales upon a large scale, starting with a single leading idea, and depending upon the elaboration of a small group of characters. Poe, who stands in the forefront of story-tellers, never ventured upon a more sustained effort. Bret Harte, again, who can point certainly to two and perhaps to three short stories of unsurpassed merit, could never hope for a permanent place in literature for his "Gabriel Conroy," strong as it is in parts. James Payn has produced excellent work both on the larger and on the smaller scale, but, speaking generally, it may be said to be a very rare thing to find an author who can excel in either art; as rare, probably, as to find a sculptor who could cut a first-rate cameo, and yet was equally expert at hewing out Titanic groups of figures.

Now Mr. Stevenson has done this. He can claim to have mastered the whole gamut of fiction. His short stories are good, and his long ones are good. On the whole, however, the short ones are the more characteristic, and the more certain to retain their position in English literature. The shorter effort suits his genius. With some choice authors, as with some rare vintages, a sip gives the real flavor better than a draught. It is eminently so with Mr. Stevenson. His novels have all

conspicuous virtues, but they have usually some flaw, some drawback, which may weaken their permanent value. In the tales, or at least in the best of the tales, the virtues are as conspicuous as ever, but the flaws have disappeared. The merits of his short stories are more readily assessed too as his serious rivals in that field are few indeed. Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Stevenson; those are the three, put them in what order you will, who are the greatest exponents of the short story in our language. Another "Archibald Malmaison," however, would give a second Hawthorne almost as strong a claim as the first.

"Prince Otto" is chronologically the first of Stevenson's longer works of fiction, and there is internal evidence that it was written at the time when he was most strongly under the influence of George Meredith. No one can read the German chapters of "Harry Richmond" and then turn to "Prince Otto" without feeling that the one has, in a distant and perfectly legitimate way, inspired the other. There is the same petty and formal court situated in some vague Teutonic cloudland, the same fine, diplomatic flavor about it, the same unreal and yet charming Dresden-china characters with their cross purposes, their quick wits, and their polished talk. In Meredith's book, however, we are on good terms with the inimitable Roy Richmond, before he brings us to this no-man's-land, and we have therefore one tangible person whom we know, and who furnishes us with some sort of a standard by which we may measure the others. We miss this in Stevenson's. For a time we cling to the English traveller, Sir John, as one person who is well within our own personal knowledge, and at first he justifies our trust; but, alas, Sir John becomes corrupted by the manners of Grunewald, and plunges off into aphorism and shadowdom. Even Gordon, the Scotch soldier of fortune, cannot bear up against the prevailing tone, but becomes as introspective and didactic as his sovereign lord. Hence it comes that there is a mist—iridescent, if you will, but none the less a mist—which hangs over the whole business and separates it from the work-a-day world, as we know it. The people are not human. They are bright, witty, perverse, wise, but they are not human. We do not see any of them clearly. We cannot take much personal interest in their fortunes, in their loves, or in their hates. An ostler who steals his horse's oats is welcome to the reader as one little prosaic and homely

figure in all this clash of high sentiment and flashing repartee. To sum all in a word, the story is Meredithian, and there is probably no other man who could have reproduced so admirably the peculiar and subtle methods of the master.

Meredith was made to be imitated. His mission is not so much to tell stories himself, as to initiate a completely new method in the art of fiction, to infuse fresh spirit into a branch of literature which was in much need of regeneration. His impatient and audacious genius has refused to be fettered by conventionalities. He has turned away from the beaten and well-trod track, and has cleared a path for himself through thorny and doubtful ways. Such a pioneer would have worked in vain were there not younger men who were ready to follow closely in his steps, to hold what he has gained, and to strike off from it to right and to left. It is a safe prophecy to say that for many generations to come his influence will be strongly felt in fiction. His works might be compared to one of those vast inchoate pyramids, out of which new-comers have found materials wherewith to build many a dainty little temple or symmetrical portico. To say that Stevenson was under the influence of Meredith is no more than to say that he wrote in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and was familiar with the literature of his day. All good work, especially all early good work of a man, shows the influence of some model upon which he has fashioned his style of work. Meredith himself, in his loquacious and motherly Mrs. Berry, shows the influence of Dickens, just as Mr. George Moore's "Mummer's Wife" reflects the careful and candid work of Zola, or Hall Caine's "Deemster" is moulded upon the breadth and vigor of Victor Hugo.

A very singular mental reaction took Mr. Stevenson from one pole to the other of imaginative work, from the subtle, dainty lines of "Prince Otto" to the direct, matter-of-fact, eminently practical and Defoe-like narratives of "Treasure Island" and of "Kidnapped." Both are admirable pieces of English, well conceived, well told, striking the reader at every turn with some novel situation, some new combination of words which just fits the sense as a cap fits a nipple. "Treasure Island" is perhaps the better story, while "Kidnapped" may have the longer lease of life as being an excellent and graphic sketch of the state of the Highlands after the last Jacobite insurrection. Each contains one novel and admirable

character. Alan Breck in the one, and Long John in the other. Surely John Silver, with his face the size of a ham, and his little gleaming eyes like crumbs of glass in the centre of it, is the king of all seafaring desperadoes. Observe how the strong effect is produced in his case, seldom by direct assertion on the part of the storyteller, but usually by comparison, innuendo, or indirect reference. The objectionable Billy Bones is haunted by the dread of "a seafaring man with one leg." Captain Flint, we are told, was a brave man; "He was afraid of none, not he, only Silver — *Silver was that genteel.*" Or, again, where John himself says, "There was some that was feared of Pew, and some that was feared of Flint; but Flint his own self was feared of me. Feared he was and proud. They was the roughest crew afloat was Flint's. The devil himself would have been feared to go to sea with them. Well, now, I tell you, I'm not a boasting man, and you seen yourself how easy I keep company; but when I was quartermaster, *lambs* wasn't the word for Flint's old buccaneers." So by a touch here and a hint there, there grows upon us the individuality of this smooth-tongued, ruthless, masterful, one-legged devil. He is to us not a creation of fiction, but an organic living reality with whom we have come into contact; such is the effect of the fine suggestive strokes with which he is drawn. And the buccaneers themselves, how simple and yet how effective are the little touches which indicate their ways of thinking and of acting. "I want to go into that cabin, I do; I want their pickles, and wine, and that." "Now if you had sailed along o' Bill you wouldn't have stood there to be spoke to twice — not you. That was never Bill's way, nor the way of sich as sailed with him." Scott's *Buccaneers* in "The Pirate" are admirable, but they lack something human which we find here. It will be long before John Silver loses his place in sea fiction — "and you may lay to that."

There is still a touch of the Meredithian manner in these books, different as they are in general scope from anything which he has attempted. There is the apt use of an occasional archaic or unusual word, the short, strong descriptions, the striking metaphors, the somewhat staccato fashion of speech. Yet in spite of this flavor, they have quite individuality enough to constitute a school of their own. Their faults, or rather perhaps their limitations, lie never in the execution, but entirely in the original conception. They picture

only one side of life, and that a strange and exceptional one. There is no female interest. We feel that it is an apotheosis of the boy's story — the penny number of our youth *in excelsis*. But it is all so good, so fresh, so picturesque, that, however limited its scope, it still retains a definite and well-assured place in literature. There is no reason why "Treasure Island" should not be to the rising generation of the twenty-first century what "Robinson Crusoe" has been to that of the nineteenth. The balance of probability is all in that direction.

The modern masculine novel, dealing almost exclusively with the rougher, more stirring side of life, with the objective rather than the subjective, marks the reaction against the abuse of love in fiction. This one phase of life in its orthodox aspect, and ending in the conventional marriage, has been so hackneyed and worn to a shadow, that it is not to be wondered at that there is a tendency sometimes to swing to the other extreme and to give it less than its fair share in the affairs of men. In British fiction, nine books out of ten have held up love and marriage as the be-all and end-all of life. Yet we know, in actual practice, that this is not so. In the career of the average man his marriage is an incident, and a momentous incident; but it is only one of several. He is swayed by many strong emotions; his business, his ambitions, his friendships, his struggles with the recurrent dangers and difficulties which tax a man's wisdom and his courage. Love will often play a subordinate part in his life. How many go through the world without ever loving at all? It jars upon us then to have it continually held up as the predominating, all-important fact in life; and there is a not unnatural tendency among a certain school, of which Stevenson is certainly the leader, to avoid altogether a source of interest which has been so misused and overdone. If all love-making were like that between Richard Feverel and Lucy Desborough, then indeed we could not have too much of it; but to be made attractive once more, the passion must be handled by some great master who has courage to break down conventionalities and to go straight to actual life for his inspiration.

"The Black Arrow" can hardly rank with the books already mentioned. Whether it is that the telling of the story in the third person does not suit Mr. Stevenson's method so well as the personal narrative, or whether it may be that the

mediæval atmosphere is uncongenial to him, the result is certainly very far below his usual level. In most of his writing, he appears to produce an effect without striving for it. Here, on the contrary, he strives continually, but never quite attains it. There is none of that air of precision and reality which marked its predecessors, nor is it worthy in any way to be compared to them. Here, however, as in his weaker tales, there are occasional vivid flashes which go far to leaven the whole. The picture of the unhappy man who runs down the glade amidst the laughter and the arrows of the concealed archers, is as good as it could be, and so is the sketch of the tumultuous flight, thundering down the road, and of the pursuer who hacks about with a broken sword, "cursing the while in a voice which was scarce human." In these touches we see the great writer, while what falls below may be well put down to stress of travel and fluctuation of health. The same may be said of "The Wrong Box." Fear, horror, surprise, are emotions on which he can work as few have ever done, but humor or its twin brother pathos have never yet shown themselves to be prominent among his gifts. Least of all is broad humor adapted to his genius. Besides, in this particular instance, there is a somewhat grim and repellant basis to the joke, which makes it just a little incongruous and ghastly. On the whole, although it is a very creditable work for Mr. Osborne to have been concerned in, it can hardly be welcomed by all true admirers of Mr. Stevenson, who have learned from him to be a little dainty and exacting in their taste for fiction.

"The Master of Ballantrae," however, is a bird of another feather. It aims high, and falls very little short of the point aimed at. It may, perhaps, be less graphic than "Kidnapped," and lack the continuous stir of "Treasure Island," but it is broader in its scope, and freer in its handling than either of its predecessors. It contains one carefully elaborated and delicately drawn female figure in Alison Graeme, whose whole character, in its strength and in its perversity, is admirably natural and original. The male characters, too, are a stronger group than he has ever before brought together. Besides the central Mephistophelean figure of the master, there is his no less formidable brother Harry, both drawn with extraordinary vigor and intensity. Then on a smaller scale, but almost equally good, are the sprightly Chevalier Burke and the admirable old lord. How clearly we are made

to see him when the news of his son's death is carried to him in the night. "He, too, sat up in bed; very aged and bloodless he looked; and whereas he had a certain largeness of appearance when dressed for daylight, he now seemed frail and little, and his face (the wig being laid aside) not bigger than a child's." The minor characters are all good, from the pragmatical Mackellar, and the faithful Secundra Dass, down to the objectionable, piratical gentleman who burns sulphur, and shrieks "Hell! hell!" in his cabin. We do not seem to see the Sarah and her crew quite as plainly as we did the old Walrus, nor is there a Long John upon her ship's books. The whole story centres, however, round the diabolical master, and it is upon his cold, methodical, black-hearted villainy that it must chiefly depend for its effect. A more utterly ruthless scoundrel has never been depicted. Here is one episode which gives his character in a nutshell, and is at the same time a very good example of Stevenson's terse and startling manner of producing an effect. They are escaping, three of them, *arcades omnes*, across an American swamp with some treasure. The common seaman of the party, who is somewhat *de trop*, blunders into a dangerous bog.

Presently we saw him sink a little down, draw up his feet and sink again; and so, twice. Then he turned his face to us, pretty white.

"Lend a hand," said he; "I am in a bad place."

"I don't know about that," says Ballantrae, standing still.

Dutton burst out into the most violent oaths, sinking a little lower as he did so, so that the mud was nearly up to his waist, and plucking a pistol from his belt—

"Help me," he cries, "or die and be damned to you!"

"Nay," says Ballantrae, "I did but jest. I am coming." And he set down his own packet and Dutton's, which he was then carrying. "Do not venture near until we see if you are needed," said he to me, and went forward alone to where the man was bogged. He was quiet now, though he still held the pistol, and the marks of terror on his countenance were very moving to behold.

"For the Lord's sake," said he, "look sharp!"

Ballantrae was now got close up.

"Keep still," says he, and seemed to consider; and then, "Reach out both your hands."

Dutton laid down his pistol, and so watery was the top surface that it went clear out of sight; with an oath he stooped to snatch it, and as he did so Ballantrae leaned forth and stabbed him between the shoulders. Up went

his hands over his head—I know not whether with the pain, or to ward himself—and the next moment he doubled forward in the mud.

Ballantrae was already over the ankles, but he plucked himself out and came back to me where I stood with my knees smiting one another.

"The devil take you, Francis!" says he. "I believe you are a half-hearted fellow, after all."

That is a truly Stevensonian scene, and one that haunts the reader like some grisly nightmare. Associate this horrid deed with a gentleman of polished address, striking features, elegant dress, and immense personal courage and energy, and you have one of the most effective and thorough-going villains in fiction.

Mr. Stevenson, like one of his own characters, has an excellent gift of silence. He invariably sticks to his story, and is not to be diverted off to discourse upon views of life or theories of the universe. A story-teller's business is to tell his story. If he wishes to air his views upon other matters he can embody them in small independent works, as Mr. Stevenson has done. Where a character gives vent to opinions which throw a light upon his own individuality that is a different thing, but it is surely intolerable that an author should stop the action of his story to give his own private views upon things in general. Unfortunately, our greatest authors are the worst sinners in this respect. What would be thought of a dramatist who brought his piece to a standstill, while he came in person to the footlights and discoursed upon social inequality or the nebular hypothesis? Mr. Stevenson is too true an artist to fall into this error, with the result that he never loses his hold upon his reader's attention. He has shown that a man may be terse and plain, and yet free himself from all suspicion of being shallow and superficial. No man has a more marked individuality, and yet no man effaces himself more completely when he sets himself to tell a tale.

A short estimate of his various stories, however imperfect, must be supplemented by a few general observations as to his style, and the methods which he uses to produce the subtle charm which hangs over his work. To analyze these effects seems as ruthless a business as to pull a flower to pieces to show its component parts. There is much in his work which depends upon that original innate power which is above analysis. This is aided and supplemented, however, by certain wiles of literary craftsmanship which give

the peculiar flavor and daintiness to his writings.

The use of novel and piquant forms of speech is one of the most obvious of his devices. No man handles his adjectives with greater judgment and nicer discrimination. There is hardly a page of his work where we do not come across words and expressions which strike us with a pleasant sense of novelty, and yet express the meaning with admirable conciseness. "His eyes came *coasting* round to me." "The pith went out of my legs." It is dangerous to begin quoting, as the examples are interminable, and each suggests another. Now and then he misses his mark, but it is very seldom. As an example, "an eye-shot" does not commend itself as a substitute for "a glance," and "to tee-hee" for "to giggle" grates somewhat upon the ear, though the authority of Chaucer might be cited for the expression.

Next in order is his extraordinary faculty for the use of pithy similes, which arrest the attention and stimulate the imagination. "His voice sounded hoarse and awkward, like a rusty lock." "I saw her sway, like something stricken by the wind." "His laugh rang false, like a cracked bell." "His voice shook like a taut rope." "My mind flying like a weaver's shuttle." "His blows resounded on the grave as thick as sobs." "These private guilty considerations I would continually observe to peep forth in the man's talk like rabbits from a hill." Nothing could be more effective than these direct and homely comparisons.

Another characteristic device is the repetition in a speech of "he said," or "he continued," or "he went on," giving an intensity to the whole, riveting and re-riveting the reader's attention upon the speaker. Many examples might be quoted of this. "'He's not of this world,' *whispered my lord*. 'I have struck my sword through his vitals,' *he cried*. 'I have felt the hilt dirl on his breastbone time and again,' *he repeated*, with a gesture indescribable. 'But he was never dead for that,' *said he*. 'Why should I think he was dead now? No, not till I see him rotting,' *says he*." Or again, "'They are not yours, are they not?' *returned Raeburn*. 'Think,' *he continued*, 'of the disgrace for your respectable parents! Think, *he went on*, taking Harry by the wrist, 'Think of the colonies and the Day of Judgment!'"

Akin to this is the striking and powerful effect which he produces by the reitera-

tion of a word or phrase. "'O God!' I screamed, and 'O God!' again and again." "'Never a good hour have I gotten of you since you were born — no, never one good hour,' and repeated it again the third time." Many examples might be quoted of this mannerism, but never one where it is not effective.

After all, however, the main characteristic of Stevenson is his curious instinct for saying in the briefest space just those few words which stamp the impression upon the reader's mind. He will make you see a thing more clearly than you would probably have done had your eyes actually rested upon it. Here are a few of these word-pictures, taken haphazard from among hundreds of equal merit.

Not far off Macconochie was standing with his tongue out of his mouth, and his hand upon his chin, like a dull fellow thinking hard.

Stewart ran after us for more than a mile, and I could not help laughing as I looked back at last and saw him on a hill, holding his hand to his side, and nearly burst with running.

Ballantrae turned to me with a face all wrinkled up, and his teeth showing in his mouth. . . . He said no word, but his whole appearance was a kind of dreadful question.

Look at him, if you doubt; look at him, grinning and gulping, a detected thief.

He looked me all over with a warlike eye, and I could see the challenge on his lips.

What could be more vivid than the effect produced by such sentences as these?

There is much more that might be said as to Mr. Stevenson's peculiar and original methods in fiction. As a minor point, it might be remarked that he is the inventor of what may be called the mutilated villain. It is true that Mr. Wilkie Collins has described one gentleman who had not only been deprived of all his limbs, but was further afflicted by the unsupportable name of Miserrimus Dexter. Mr. Stevenson, however, has used the effect so often, and with such telling results, that he may be said to have made it his own. To say nothing of Hyde, who was the very impersonation of deformity, there is the horrid blind Pew, Black Dog with two fingers missing, Long John with his one leg, and the sinister catechist who is blind but shoots by ear, and smites about him with his staff. In "The Black Arrow," too, there is another dreadful creature who comes tapping along with a stick. Often as he has used the device, he handles it so artistically that it never fails to produce its effect.

In this short essay we must confine our-

selves to Mr. Stevenson's work in fiction, leaving his charming volumes of travels and essays untouched. His poems, too, might well form the subject of a separate paper. They are always good, and sometimes very good. "Ticonderoga," for example, might lay a fair claim to be the second best narrative ballad — Coleridge's masterpiece being always first — in the whole range of our literature. All this, however, we must pass. It is a trite saying that he who exhausts his subject is apt to exhaust his reader. Enough has been said, if anything needed to be said, to show that Mr. Stevenson has every claim, not only upon the contemporary popularity which he enjoys, but upon the lasting fame which springs from thorough work thoroughly done. However far from England he may travel, he still lives, and is a welcome guest at many a thousand English firesides. No living man has a better right to solace himself with that highest comfort which man can enjoy, that he has given pleasure, and has lessened pain.

A. CONAN DOYLE.

From Longman's Magazine.

THE HOME OF CHARLOTTE BRONTE.

ON Monday, the 30th of September last — a solemn, still autumnal day, with red and yellow foliage tinting the landscape on every side, and with pale, shadowy vapors wreathing every rocky hilltop — I beheld for the first time a certain barren Yorkshire moor, familiar to the mind's eye of every lover of "Jane Eyre," "Shirley," or "Villette." At last I was at Haworth — bleak, rude, grim Haworth; Haworth, within whose rough-hewn boundaries was lived out that strange, isolated family life, so monotonous and uneventful outwardly, so charged with passion and intensity within, which has made the hitherto unknown little village among the hills famous forevermore.

Much as railway penetration has done to open up the moorland regions of the north of England, it has effected here but little change. Upon leaving the platform of a small, primitive station we mounted the steep and narrow little street — it might have been the original of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Hill called Straight — and steeper and steeper it rose in front of us at every step; while down its centre there presently poured, with a clatter, clatter, clatter of wooden clogs, the village lads

and lasses just let loose from school, each lusty urchin clad in such a suit of brown corduroys as must have set at naught the rudest blasts of winter, to say nothing of rugged walls and gnarled branches. (N.B. — Shall I confess that straightway I bought in the open street a suit for my own little climber, and wearer, and tearer; and that only the vision of parquet floors and Persian rugs prevented a pair of the sturdy, brass-bound clogs being added to the purchase?)

"Could anybody show us the way to Mr. Brown's?" was our first inquiry, Mr. Brown being the nephew of that Martha Brown who, it may be remembered, was the "new girl" who succeeded Tabby, when Tabby's days at Haworth parsonage were numbered. A mite of four was told off to trot in front of the ladies to the neat little stationer's shop, within which stood Martha Brown's nephew, only too glad to lead the way up his little back staircase to the room wherein was laid out all he had to show pertaining to the revered family, in whose service his old relation had lived the best part of her life.

And now I must just remark that it is a mistake to suppose that the memory of the Brontës is dying out in the place which once knew them so well. Every old villager we spoke to — and these were not a few — had something to say, and usually some reminiscence to offer on the subject. The names of "Charlotte," "Emily," and "Branwell" dropped easily and familiarly from their lips; and yet there was nothing impertinent, nothing the least disrespectful, in the sound; it merely seemed as if these simple folks cherished a hallowed remembrance, with which any of the ordinary forms of speech would have been incompatible.

One nice little matron, with a chastened, subdued demeanor and a face that plainly told life had been to her no child's play, had perhaps more to tell than all the rest about the Brontës. She had seen "Mrs. Nicholls" pass into the church in her bridal attire on the wedding morn — "very plain, but Charlotte always was very plain in her dress;" and again had seen her re-enter the same churchyard gates but a few brief months later, when carried to her grave. "She was never very intimate, never at all *free-spoken* with the Haworth people." "Oh, they liked her; nobody had ever a word against her; but it was understood that she, and indeed all the family, liked best to be let alone. Charlotte would come and go. She was a very quick walker, and she would turn the cor-